

Finish Line Scholars Program

Monday, October 19, 2020

Colleagues,

Today, I am pleased to share with you the exciting launch of the California Community Colleges Finish Line Scholars Program. Finish Line will provide scholarships to community college students who are halfway through their course of study to enable them to finish their goal of completing a certificate or degree or transferring to a college or university. It will also provide emergency financial aid to students facing unexpected financial hardships. Thirty-four community colleges are eligible for the program in the three regions of California with the lowest percentage of adults who have college degrees: the Inland Empire, the Central Valley, and the Far North. The program is designed to support achievement of goal six in our *Vision for Success*, which focuses on reducing regional achievement gaps for students.

The Finish Line Scholars Program is made possible through an extraordinary philanthropic gift, a pledge of **\$100 million** over 20 years to support our students. We believe this gift to the Foundation for California Community Colleges is the largest for community colleges in the nation to date. It will make a meaningful, measurable, and lasting difference by helping more students overcome challenges and go all-in to achieve their educational goals. Plus, in the long-term, it will help build a well prepared workforce, a strong economy, and a bright future for communities in these regions.

I ask that you please keep this information confidential until 1 p.m. PDT tomorrow, Oct. 20.

The first year's funding will be distributed to students as emergency financial aid. This focus is critical as students struggle to stay enrolled in the face of a health and economic crisis. Grants of up to \$150,000 will be made to the 34 colleges by the Foundation for California Community Colleges beginning this fall to support students during the current 2020-21 academic year.

In future years, the 34 colleges will be eligible for annual grants to support scholarships and emergency financial aid.

- Scholarships of up to \$18,500 per year will help students go all-in to reach the finish line of their goal, whether that is to complete a certificate or degree or transfer, and can be used to cover expenses such as textbooks, equipment, transportation, housing, and food.
- Emergency financial aid will be flexible to help students overcome short-term financial barriers. Up to 20% of funds, in future years, can be used for emergency financial aid.

Below, please find the list of eligible colleges. These colleges will be contacted directly by the Foundation for California Community Colleges with more information, and a Vision Resource Center community is being developed for eligible colleges to access materials and support. Also,

we will send a link to the Foundation's web page with more details following tomorrow's news conference.

- **Far North:** Butte College, College of the Redwoods, College of the Siskiyous, Feather River College, Lassen College, Mendocino College, Shasta College
- **Central region:** Bakersfield College, Cerro Coso Community College, Clovis Community College, College of the Sequoias, Columbia College, Fresno City College, Madera Community College, Merced College, Modesto Junior College, Porterville College, Reedley College, San Joaquin Delta College, Taft College, West Hills College Coalinga, West Hills College Lemoore
- **Inland Empire:** Barstow College, Chaffey College, College of the Desert, Copper Mountain College, Crafton Hills College, Moreno Valley College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Norco College, Palo Verde College, Riverside City College, San Bernardino Valley College, Victor Valley College

This level of philanthropy is extraordinary for community colleges, not just in California but in the nation. I hope this donation will inspire other donors to support community colleges, which are the primary engine of social mobility in our nation. The Finish Line Scholars Program is an unprecedented opportunity to support our students and has the potential to be transformative for our colleges and our communities.

Best,

Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Chancellor
California Community Colleges